Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Tuesday, June 9, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Question day has rolled around again, listeners, and inquiries have piled high waiting for answers. As usual, questions about foods are in the majority, so they get first place on the schedule today.

Here is a letter from a lady who says she is in a predicament as to where to store honey. She tried keeping it in her cellar along with her canned goods and found that it fermented. Then she put it in the refrigerator and it became cloudy and crystallized. Where can she keep it in good condition?

The foods people at the Bureau of Home Economics who made that honey study I have told you about -- they have the answer to this question. They report that honey keeps best if tightly sealed and in a dry place at room temperature -- that is, about 70 degrees Fahrenehit. Like other sugar sirups, honey will absorb moisture in a damp place like a damp cellar, unless securely sealed. The refrigerator is also a safe place to keep honey if tightly covered. True, the cold does tend to cloud and crystallize the sirup but that does not harm it. You can easily liquify it again by warming the jar of honey in moderately hot water. Please notice that phrase, "moderately hot." The honey investigation showed that if you heat honey above 140 degrees Fahrenheit, you are likely to injure both its color and its delicate flavor.

Here is another point about crystallization. Most honey crystallizes on aging. But different varieties differ in how readily they do it. As you know, honey is a combination of different kinds of sugars -- contains both dextrose or grape-sugar, and levulose or fruit sugar. Alfalfa honey and other varieties with a high percentage of grape-sugar crystallize most rapidly. But sage honey and tupelo honey which contain a good deal of fruit-sugar will remain liquid for long periods.

The next question comes from a lady who is disturbed about the color of the rice she boils. She says that before cooking the rice looks perfectly clear and white, but that it comes out of the kettle with a grayish-green tinge which is anything but appetizing and attractive. She asks what causes the color and how to prevent it.

Again, we will refer the question to the foods people. They say that the minerals in the water in some sections of the country cause boiled rice to have a grayish or greenish cast. They have found that the remedy is a pinch of cream of tartar in the cooking water.

Another questioner wants to know exactly how to boil rice so that it will come out white, fluffy, tender, and with separate distinct kernels.

A series of simple little tricks bring those results, so the study of rice cookery shows. I'll report to you exactly how the foods people got best results in boiling rice. To begin with, they found the best proportions to be 1 cup of rice to 2 quarts of boiling water containing 2 teaspoons of salt. They looked the rice over and washed it in hot water and drained it. When the salted water was boiling rapidly in the kettle, they added the rice gradually. Then they reduced the heat so that the rice would boil gently. Gentle boiling for rice, please note. Why? Because rapid boiling is too rough, breaks up the kernels. And cooking below boiling makes the kernels sticky.

Well, when the rice had boiled gently in an uncovered kettle until the grains were tender and had no tiny hard center, the foods people drained it at once in a colander or sieve and poured hot water through it. That hot-water rinse, they found, removed the loose starch and separated the grains.

The last step was to cover the colander with a cloth and set it over hot water on the back of the stove or in a warm oven a few minutes. This steaming swelled the kernels, made them extra light and fluffy.

Using this method of cooking, the foods people found that 1 cup of uncooked rice would yield about 3 and one-third cups of boiled rice.

So much for rice questions. Now a couple of canning queries. The first one is from a lady who is putting up fruit juice. She says she has heard that you can preserve fruit juice by using a temperature below boiling. She herself has always processed her juice in boiling water and wonders if it will keep if the temperature is lower.

Canning studies at the Bureau of Home Economics have proved that fruit juice and tomato juice are best if processed only at the simmering point. The more heat, the more change in color and flavor. At simmering temperature -- or Pasteurizing temperature, as some people call it -- you save much of the natural fresh flavor and bright color of the fruit. And this temperature is high enough to sterilize the thin juice.

Last question. A new canner wants to know why some tin cans are gold-colored inside and some are plain. Answer: Special linings in tin cans are to preserve the color of certain fruits and vegetables that change or lose color if canned in plain tin. The bright gold lining is for reddish foods that fade badly, such as red berries, cherries and beets. The dull gold lining is to prevent the discoloration of such foods as corn, and succotash.

#####